

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FACILITIES DIVISION

Employee Update No. 7

March 7, 2000

INNOVATIVE FACILITIES SUPPORT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY!

~ 1997 FD Slogan ~

New Facility Opens

The new U. S. Horticultural Research Laboratory in Ft. Pierce, Florida, replaces research facilities in Orlando, Florida. It consists of a Farm Site and a Laboratory Site. The mission of the laboratory is to develop and sustain independent and cooperative research programs on citrus and other horticultural crops produced in Florida and other subtropical production areas in the United States.

The Government took beneficial occupancy of the Farm Site on February 25, 1999. The Farm Site occupies approximately 313 acres and contains farm plots and support facilities. On December 6, 1999, the Government took beneficial occupancy of the Laboratory Site. This site contains approximately 150,000 square feet of research space and includes laboratory and office space, an insectary, a headhouse, greenhouses, and screenhouses. A dedication ceremony for the new laboratory will be held on April 17, 2000. The total project cost, including design and construction, is \$34.3 million.

New Engineers in ARS

Dave Mills reported for duty in the Facilities Engineering Branch on February 28 as an Engineering Project Manager. Dave was an

"Engineer in Charge" with the Navy's Engineering Field Activity. Dave's background is in civil engineering. Dave replaces Don Jones who was recently selected as the FEB Team Leader.

New engineering contacts in the field include Keith O'Brien as the Facility Engineer at the National Agricultural Library and Dovain Britt as the new Area Engineer for the Mid South Area.

Hugene Fields Accepted into the Executive Potential Program

Hugene Fields has been accepted into the 2000 Executive Potential Program (EPP) of the USDA Graduate School. The EPP is a 12-month career enhancement program that offers training and development experiences for high-potential GS-13-15 employees who are moving into managerial positions. During this year-long training program, Hugene will be required to complete two 60-day developmental detail assignments, four senior executive interviews, a 3-day shadowing assignment of a high level Agency official, and an experiential learning project. Congratulations and good luck Hugene!

Strategic Plan Update

Since the last newsletter, FD has made process and only has one remaining goal in objective 5 to complete. Here's the update:

Objective 1--

SHEMB completed the production of two training videos on Radiation and Biological Safety. The videos have been distributed to the field and are available in the SMART Center. We have received positive feedback on the contents and quality of the videos.

Objective 5--

FEB, FCB, and Area personnel are in the final stages process of developing a plan that will outline policies and procedures to determine A-E accountability for design errors and implement measures for corrective design actions and recovery of monetary damages to the Government. Look for guidance to be in place by May 2000.

Now is the time for all employees to start thinking about our next cycle of Strategic Plan goals. If you have any suggestions on what you think the division needs to work on to improve services, please let your branch chief know.

FD Branch Goals

The FD Branches have identified

goals that some of you will be involved in accomplishing. These goals are in the Branch Chiefs' November 1, 1999, to December 31, 2000, performance standards as follows:

Contracting:

- C Improve effectiveness of support to Contracting Officers (CO).
- C Investigate alternative A-E and contractor performance rating systems.
- C Develop CO procedures manual.
- C Develop additional contract verbage to add design/build capability to new A-E and Indefinite Quantity Contracts.
- C Explore insurance options on construction contracts.

Engineering:

- C Re-write generic Scope of Work for A-E Services.
- C Complete Phase II of the A-E accountability PET.
- C Publish an Engineering Project Manager Handbook.
- C Review current policy on payment of design review and permitting fees by local entities.
- C Successful close out of construction projects and develop lessons learned from recently completed construction projects.

Real Property and Space:

- C Complete the relocation of CSREES and NASS employees (Waterfront Center and South Building).
- C Complete an Interagency Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation and implement the Quarters Management and Information System at the Headquarters and Area level.

- C Standardize user fees for the use of ARS controlled land and facilities.
- C Initiate rewrite of Manual 245.1, ARS Real Property Management.
- C Initiate the interface of the Real Property Management Information System with the redesign of the Resource Management Information System (RMIS).

Safety Health and Environmental:

- C Design and develop safety, health, and environmental management related education/training packages for USDA Safety Management Conference.
- C Develop and implement the ARS Industrial Hygiene Program.
- C Ensure ARS has adequate contract support for environmental requirements.
- C Develop SHEM related standard operating procedures for inclusion in Manual 230.0 and for use as training documents at the Safety Conference.

AFM Space Downtown

RPMB Space Management Team has been quite busy in the last few months. Here's the latest on move activities downtown.

CSREES Plant and Animal Systems and Natural Resources and Environment relocated from the Aerospace to the third floor of Waterfront Center. This move was completed in January 2000.

CSREES staff located in the South Building moved to the third and fourth floors of Waterfront Center in February 2000. Offices affected include Families, 4-H, and Nutrition; Science and Education Resources Development; and Economic and Community Systems.

CSREES Competitive Research Grants

and Awards Management is scheduled to move in mid-April from Aerospace to the second floor of the Waterfront Center.

NASS Census Division is scheduled to move to the newly renovated third wing of the South Building on May 11 and 17, 2000. These offices will be located on the fifth and sixth floors.

New Environmental Contracting Capability

ARS and other Federal agencies now have a new method of obtaining contracted environmental services. The General Services Administration now offers the services of an environmental contractor on their federal supply schedule. The customer (user agencies) determines which contractor is selected and then manages the project. Picking from the GSA schedule shaves months off of the procurement process by eliminating the need for advertizing in Commerce Business Daily, and limiting the number of proposals to be evaluated. SHEMB and FCB staff met with GSA officials in January and were impressed with the variety and caliber of the contract services offered. There are limitations as to the type of work which can be done, but we expect to use this source in the future.

Department Safety Conference Postponed until FY 2001

The Department Safety Office has decided to postpone the May

2000 conference until the spring of 2001. Reasons cited were the inability to find a suitable facility in San Diego for the proposed timeframe, lack of participation of some agencies, and the lack of a vendor to provide the training.

Moving the conference to November was considered but rejected because of fears that there may be funding issues early in the fiscal year. The timeframe from May to November does not work for many agencies, including ARS, because many Collateral Duty Safety Officers will be in the field.

The site of the conference at this point is undecided, but the consensus appears to favor a major western US city. More information about the proposed FY 2001 conference will be provided as it becomes available.

ARS' FY 2001 Budget

The President's budget request was sent to Congress on February 7, 2000. For buildings and facilities, the budget proposes funding of \$39,300,000 in FY 2001 for continuing facility modernization of major research centers, the U. S. National Arboretum, and the National Agricultural Library:

Ames, IA	\$ 9.0 million
Beltsville, MD	13.3 million
Albany, CA	4.9 million
Plum Island, NY	7.0 million
National Arboretum	3.3 million
NAL	1.8 million

Next, the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees will markup the President's budget this summer. We will keep you posted on any actions as we move through the budget process.

AFM Management Forum

The AFM Management Team met on February 24, 2000, to discuss general management issues and questions of interest to all divisions. This forum will be held quarterly with AFM Senior Management, Division Directors, Branch Chiefs, and Team leaders. Topics discussed:

- C Improving AFM All Hands Meetings
- C Ziff-Davis Training
- C AFM Leadership and Development (LEAD) Program
- C AFM Mentoring Program
- C Cross Divisional Staff Meetings
- C Managing Employees at Remote Locations
- C Facility Issues at Portals Building
- C Travel Policies

Details of the discussions will be given at the AFM All Hands Meeting on March 9.

Upcoming Special Observances

Employees are encouraged to participate and attend special observances programs. Employees must receive approval from their supervisor to participate. Upcoming Special Observances:

- C Women's History Month--March
- C Professional Secretaries Week (celebrated the last full week)--April
- C Take Our Daughters/Sons to Work Day (fourth Thursday)--April

- C Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month--May

For more specific information about the programs, please call Carolyn Moore or Darlene Butler on 301- 504-6507 or visit the ARS EE/CR office website <http://www.ars.usda.gov/eeo/>.

Online Diversity Training

The Office of Civil Rights is sponsoring online training "Handling Diversity in the Workplace." This training is mandatory, and it is AFM's intention to have everyone complete the training by April 1, 2000. If you experience problems accessing the module, contact the Help Desk. If you still cannot access the module, hard copies can be obtained from Sue Dixon. Sue can be reached on 202-690-0372.

Semiannual FD Outstanding Employee Award

Nominations for the next semiannual FD Outstanding Employee Award are due March 14. Nominations may be submitted by FD employees or by a FD customer.

This is an important FD award that began in February 1987 and was designed to recognize nonsupervisory FD employees who have gone the extra mile in delivering facility services to our customers. Please think back over the past 6 months and consider nominating someone

that you believe has demonstrated outstanding customer service--these can be FD employees you have worked with directly, or employees whose work you have observed. Congratulations to Christina Beaulieu, FCB, who receive the last award for her extra efforts displayed in administrating projects in the SAA!

AFM All Hands Meeting

The next AFM all hands meeting will be held March 9, 2000, from 10 - 11:30 a.m. at the Auditorium in Building 003. Topics of interest will include the Quality of Work Life Team efforts, a number of Senior Staff initiatives, an update on the May 2000 ARS Support Staff Conference, and other items. Transportation will be provided to and from the meeting for AFM employees located downtown. Please plan on attending. This will be a opportunity to learn more about what is happening in AFM.

Customer Surveys

In accordance with The AFM Strategic Plan, all divisions will conduct a formal assessment of customer service every 2 years. FD obtained customer feedback in February. It looks like we received a good response. The results of this survey will be summarized for AFM Management by March 31 and shared with FD employees as well. HRD is scheduled to send out their customer survey in April. You may be asked to provide feedback. If so, honest feedback is encouraged to help improve the quality of service in AFM.

We Need Articles!

If you have any articles or suggestions

to improve the FD Newsletter, let Valencia or Pat know.

Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

~ Author unknown ~